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SOUTHEAST ROANOKE HISTORIC DISTRICT ALTERS A SEGMENT OF I-73 ROUTE

A Status Change

The "Keeper" of the National Register of Historic Places of the U.S. Department of the Interior determined that the "Southeast Roanoke Neighborhood" is eligible for designation as a historic district. As a result, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) informed the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) that another section of the Interstate 73 (I-73) route through Roanoke must be chosen to avoid the neighborhood. Federal regulations prohibit the development of federally funded transportation projects through National Register-eligible historic sites if other feasible alternatives exist.

A 12-mile Change

The proposal only modifies a 12-mile section of the route in southeast Roanoke, Roanoke County and northern Franklin County. No other portion of the 70-mile I-73 corridor selected by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) in June of 2001 is affected by the change.

A Change in Designation

The federal historic designation of the Southeast Roanoke Neighborhood came after a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was completed by VDOT for FHWA as part of the I-73 Location Study. The DEIS documented historic sites and cultural resources throughout the I-73 corridor. At the time, officials with Virginia's Department of Historic Resources, FHWA and VDOT did not consider the Roanoke neighborhood historically significant. A group of citizens, Virginians for Appropriate Roads, challenged the opinion, and the issue was presented to the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places for a final determination.

The Proposed Route

The option being considered for re-routing I-73 through Roanoke, Roanoke County and northern Franklin County is using existing Route 220 from Elm Avenue continuing south into the Clearbrook area of Roanoke County and then veering southeast of Buck Mountain along Route 657 (Crowell Gap Road) into Franklin County where it would rejoin the original

corridor. This route was presented to the public for review as an alternative during the I-73 public hearings held by VDOT in December 2000.

The Historic District

The newly designated historic district is bordered by Elm Avenue to the north and the old American Viscose plant to the south. From its most western limit, which includes the old Heironimus warehouse on Albemarle Avenue, it extends east to 9th Street, Penmar Avenue, the middle of the 1300 block of Pechin Avenue and the middle of the 1100 blocks of Morehead and Morgan avenues.

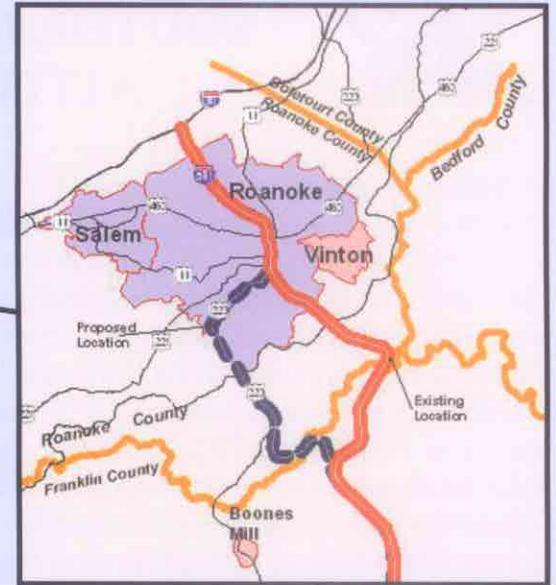
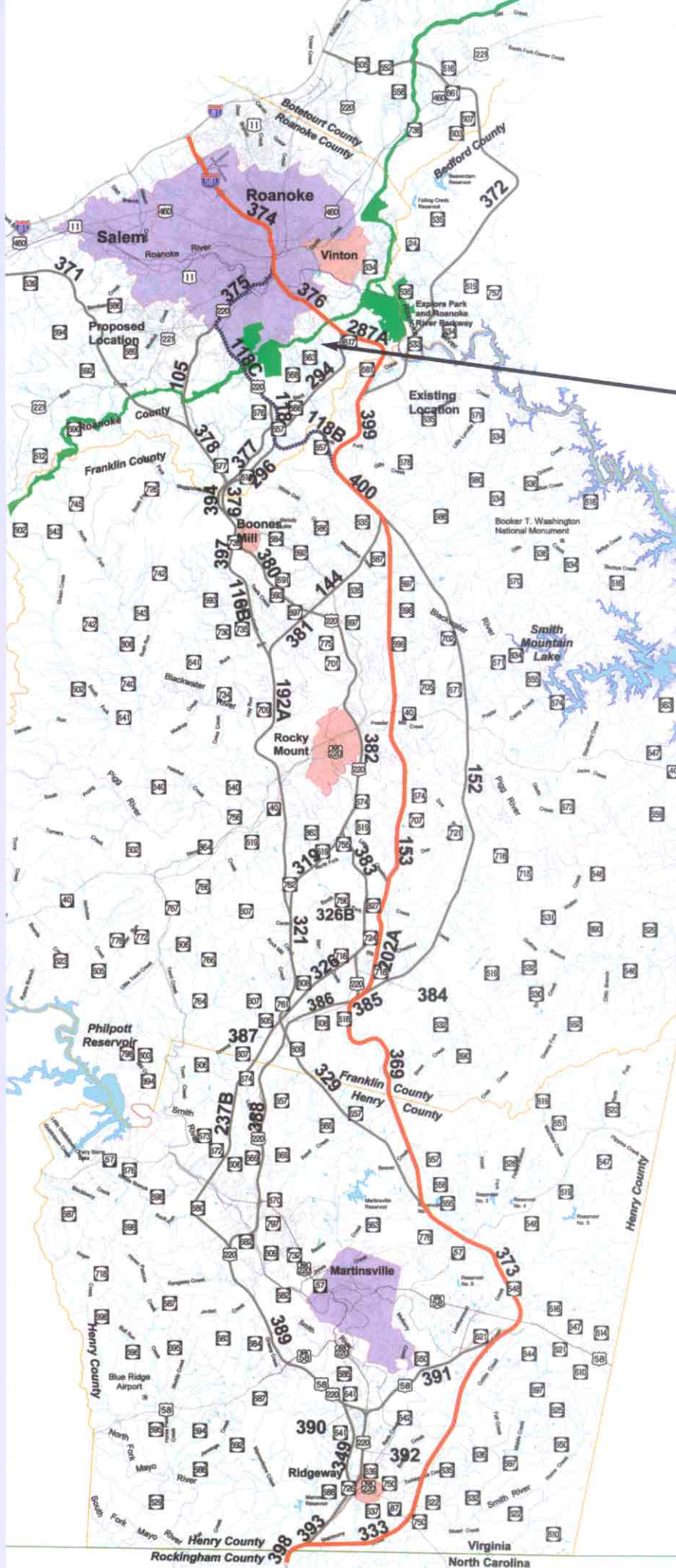


Next Steps

Later this summer, VDOT expects to present the proposed change to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) for a decision. The CTB is a panel of citizens selected by the Governor that acts as a board of directors for transportation agencies. CTB responsibilities include choosing where new roads will be located in Virginia.

Following board action, a Final Environmental Impact Statement for I-73 will be completed and forwarded to FHWA for its approval. FHWA then will issue a Record of Decision (ROD). Once a ROD is issued and funds become available, the project can move into the design stage.

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The Proposed Route

Use existing Route 220 from Elm Avenue continuing south to Clearbrook area of Roanoke County, veering southeast of Buck Mountain along Route 657 (Crowell Gap Road) into Franklin County rejoining original corridor.

The proposed change substitutes segments 375 and 118C for segments 376, 287A and 399.

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